

and keep firearms. I vigorously oppose all attempts to restrict the second amendment.

I believe that any law, whether at the local, State, or Federal level, which restricts or infringes upon law-abiding citizens' ability to own a firearm is unconstitutional and should be repealed.

The plain language of the Second Amendment clearly indicates that it was written to protect an individual's right to keep and bear arms. I believe, as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, and other founding fathers believed, that the individual right to bear arms is a representation of freedom and independence and I will always defend that right from abusive regulations and licensing.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### AMERICAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR LOWER GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to start out by saying that I know that I can't talk directly to the American people, but I hope that if anyone is out there listening that they would listen to my comments that I make to you.

Madam Speaker, I guess about 2 weeks ago probably I started getting some phone calls about different petitions on the Internet and other places about the prospects of America becoming more energy independent, that we would not be dependent on foreign oil sources, and that we would be able to use our own natural resources to meet our energy needs.

And people began to ask if I had gone and signed them or had seen them. One was on [americansolutions.com](http://americansolutions.com), which offered to increase domestic oil drilling. There was one about a gas holiday. There were several about developing alternative energy sources. But there were some interesting petitions against drilling by Democratic Senator Ms. BOXER, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace.

As I walked into a service station in my district, there was a petition on the counter, Madam Speaker, that said:

Sign here if you want to let your representatives know that you're for lowering gas prices. And I'm assuming that the proprietor of that station had it there to keep people from talking bad to him about the price that was on his pump.

But what I decided after looking at all these different petitions is that I would come up with a petition so the American people could understand where their representative was at. We know where our constituents are. I think on the American Solutions petition they are at like 1.7 million people. So we can kind of understand where the American people are at. They want us to be independent. They want us to increase our U.S. oil production.

So what I decided to do was come up with a petition, and what this petition says is: American energy solutions for lower gas prices. Bring onshore oil online; bring deepwater oil online; and bring new refineries online. Realize, we have not built a refinery in this country since the late 1970s.

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And you may not realize this, because we're always talking about crude oil, but you might not realize that the United States imports 6.2 billion gallons of gas and 4.6 billion gallons of diesel every year. We import these from the United Kingdom, U.S. Virgin Islands, France, Canada, Netherlands, Norway—which, by the way, Norway is now the third largest exporter of crude oil, and back in 1965 they were energy dependent on foreign oil and they decided that they would open up to drilling in the North Sea. They are now the third largest exporter of crude oil. But we import refined gas from them—Germany, Russia, Italy, and of course the OPEC countries, which don't even really have that much refining capacity, Madam Speaker, but yet we buy refined gas from them.

So I got a petition, I've had it over here on the wall, Madam Speaker, for probably about 2 weeks now. There are 435 spaces for the Members, and then there are seven spaces for the delegates from the U.S. territories. And I'm happy to say that we've had 191 signatures. Now, this may be too simple for some people because all it says is, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans." And so we need your help, Madam Speaker. We need you to sign. I don't think you're on it, Madam Speaker.

But we've got a Web site, and it's our Web site at [house.gov/westmoreland](http://house.gov/westmoreland). And on there we have everybody that has signed, and we have everybody that we've talked to that said they would not sign. So we've got two columns, we've got a signers and a non-signers. And then also, just to let you know, we have notified every office here at least once, we will do it again next week. And some people said have, well, Congressman, they ask me how long have you been working on this? And I say,

well, about almost 2 weeks. Well, how come you only have 191 signatures? Well, Madam Speaker, I'd ask people that ask me that question, Sunday, when they're at church, try to talk to 450 people on a Sunday, it's almost hard to do, especially when you get in different conversations with folks. So if you want to understand, [house.gov/westmoreland](http://house.gov/westmoreland), Madam Speaker, that's where somebody would go if they wanted to see where their Congressman was at on this simple petition that basically just says, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans."

I would like to yield some time to my friend from Indiana.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Let me just say to my good friend, Congressman WESTMORELAND from Georgia, I am so happy that you are going to all this trouble to get all of our colleagues to sign this petition. And if you're at 191, you're not too far short of 218. And when you get 218, I will join with you to go to the Speaker and show her that we have 218 signatures—or you do—and that they ought to bring this to the floor for a vote because a majority of the House wants this done.

You know, we passed another week. A week has gone by since you and I, I think, last were on the floor. And everybody's going home for the 4th of July recess—they're going to be in parades, they're going to be on radio, they're going to have town meetings—and we haven't done anything about reducing the price of gasoline or moving toward energy independence. And so I, like you, if I were talking to the American people right now, I would say, when your Congressman or your Senator is in that parade, I want you to talk to them strongly and say, we want you to drill in America. We want you to move us toward energy independence. We've been talking about it since Jimmy Carter was President 30-something years ago, and we aren't doing anything. And that's why we're dependent on foreign oil and that's why gasoline prices are over \$4 because we aren't producing the oil here, we're sending it overseas.

We're sending over \$400 million a day to Saudi Arabia to pay for oil that we're using. We could use that money right here in America, and it would help create jobs and expand our economy. We're sending \$125 million a day to President Chavez in Venezuela, who's trying to move every country in this hemisphere toward communism and who is a good friend of the Castro brothers, Fidel and his brother Raul.

We have big problems here because we aren't drilling in America. And we need to have everybody in this country contact their Congressman and Senator and say, hey, listen, get with the program, it's time for us to move toward energy independence. We can't have this economy of ours suffer anymore.

I would like to enter into the RECORD, Madam Speaker, if I might, a